

**TESTIMONY OF ALAN L. CANADY  
ON BEHALF OF CONGRESSMAN JOHN CONYERS**

**BEFORE THE MICHIGAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
REDISTRICTING AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE  
JUNE 21, 2011**

Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, I am here today on behalf of Congressman John Conyers to express opposition to HB 4780 as substituted.

The Voting Rights Act, as interpreted by the courts, requires that black and Hispanic majority districts be drawn when reasonably possible. In Michigan, there must be two black-majority districts in the Detroit area.

The Voting Rights Act is an important federal requirement that ensures our representatives reflect America's racial and ethnic diversity.

Special attention must be paid to the Voting Rights Act whenever redistricting occurs. Section 2 requires that officials draw plans that do not unfairly dilute minority voting strength. If officials draw and enact plans that violate Section 2, such plans could be subject to legal challenge. A Section 2 lawsuit can be filed by the Attorney General of the United States, who bears primary enforcement responsibility under the Act, or by private individuals and organizations. Redistricting-related litigation can prove both costly and protracted, preventing the implementation of a final plan for several years. Thus, the legislature must be vigilant in demanding adherence to, and officials should make a good-faith effort to comply with, Section 2 of the Voting

State standards require that districts be contiguous by land with no cut-points', adhere to political boundaries, preserve communities of interest, and be contiguous and compact.. It also requires that there not be unreasonably many breaks of counties and cities/townships.

The district proposed for Congressman Conyers fails to meet any of the aforementioned standards. Congressman Conyers requests that this committee consider an alternative plan for the Detroit Area. The plan that he is offering fully complies with the requirements of the VRA and state law and is vastly more compact and preserves historic communities of interest.

Congressman Conyers understands the difficult challenge this Committee faces and appreciates all the hard work this committee has done. He is also appreciates this opportunity to testify and he looks forward to working with the Legislature to avoid costly litigation and to maintain a fair and open process

Thank you.